

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**HEARING ON THE MAYOR'S FISCAL YEAR 2003
BUDGET REQUEST ACT**



**Testimony of Dan Tangherlini
Acting Director
Department of Transportation**

**Anthony A. Williams
Mayor**

**Committee on Public Works and the Environment
Carol Schwartz, Chairperson**

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Good day, Chairperson Schwartz, Councilmembers and staff. I am Dan Tangherlini, Acting Director of the soon to be Department of Transportation (DDOT). I am pleased to present testimony to the Council in support of the Mayor's FY 2003 budget request for the functions in the DDOT.

Before I proceed, I would like to take a moment and thank you, the members of the Council, for your support and passage of Bill 14-343, the Department of Transportation Establishment Act. This piece of legislation served the extremely important goal of elevating DDOT to the level of a state transportation agency, the equivalent of its sister agencies in Maryland and Virginia. By separating transportation functions from the Department of Public Works we will enhance the District's access to federal transportation funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other sources. In addition, a separate DDOT will provide stability to the District of Columbia's economic competitiveness by improving the quality of citizens' lives through comprehensive transportation system planning. DDOT will achieve these goals by providing focus and accountability in service delivery, transportation infrastructure planning, construction, maintenance, operations and management.

In terms of the broader picture in which DDOT's FY 2003 budget request is made, the past year has been a difficult one in many ways. At the end of 2000, the federal budget looked as though it would contain surpluses for decades to come. Now it is clear that the federal budget could be in a deficit posture as early as fiscal year 2003. This change in fortune has had dramatic effects on the Federal transportation financing program, with highway funds to states suffering a nearly 30% decline in the President's proposed FY 2003

budget, due to revenue decreases. As we look across the country, almost all states have revenue shortfalls and many face potential deficits.

The Mayor has communicated to the public that for next year, we face a budget gap of roughly \$200 million. The administration's budget proposes to close that gap in a responsible and sensible ways. This has involved making some hard and possibly unpopular choices. The DDOT program has not been spared. However, FY 2003 continues a positive trend in expanded infrastructure financing - better maintenance, improved resources for trees, and investments in our neighborhoods.

FY 2002 – FY 2003 Improvements

DDOT's primary function is the provision, maintenance, and operations of transportation infrastructure. This includes more than 1,100 miles of roads; over 200 bridges; and the thousands of trees, signs, traffic signals and streetlights that line them.

Maintaining and improving our roads, highways and bridges is an essential DDOT function and during FY 2001, with the help of Congress, the Financial Authority and the Council, DDOT used National Capital Infrastructure Funds to resurface over 676 blocks of neighborhood streets in all parts of the city. And this fiscal year, we have complete 624 blocks already! We are beginning to make up the tremendous gaps between the quality of those roads that are eligible for federal funding and the local road network. I have often referred to this difference as the District's "tale of two cities", one – a federal city, and the other – a local city. Just one year ago

73% of our federally funded roads were rated good or excellent on our pavement index, while only 57% of the local roads shared that honor. That gap has closed as local roads have shot up to 65% good or excellent compared to 78% for Federal. An improvement of 13%.

The reinvestment in our infrastructure is apparent when looking at the level of resources flowing into and out of our infrastructure program. Responding to the numerous years of neglect, we have increased our capital spending on roads substantially, bringing benefits to all of our customers. Transportation infrastructure expenditures have doubled since 1999 from \$125 million to over \$250 million in 2001. And this year we project our spending will approach \$280 million for roadway projects. To put that in perspective, DDOT spent just under \$55 million in FY96, this is a remarkable 500% increase in expenditures in just 6 years.

Major Projects

This spending is producing tangible results:

1. New York Avenue: The New York Avenue upgrade at South Dakota Avenue, NE, involves rebuilding the bridges over the Anacostia River and the railroad tracks and upgrading the interchanges. This \$30 million project is to be completed by mid-May, 2002, in time for summer beach travel.
2. Georgetown: The Georgetown Project will result in a \$40 million upgrading of the utilities and streetscape to prevent flying manhole covers and provide adequate future utility service and a new streetscape for M Street and Wisconsin Avenue. DDOT is proud to

- report that an unprecedented level of cooperation has been achieved among the utilities and the residential and business communities and the District to allow the project to proceed with minimal disruption for residents, businesses and motorists. To this end, the work on M Street is proceeding at night, Sunday-Thursday. For the next phase, on Wisconsin Avenue, extensive discussions are taking place with all parties, particularly on traffic and scheduling, before any work starts.
3. SE Freeway: The reconstruction of the Southeast Freeway from 11th to 2nd Street, SE, is also approaching completion. This \$27 million project is scheduled to be finished in May.
 4. Downtown and Neighborhood Streetscapes: The current budget includes about \$45 million over the next six years for streetscape projects. Sidewalk, lighting and other improvements are planned for Georgia Ave. NW, 14th Street, NW, Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Takoma area, (Piney Branch, Blair Rd, and Carroll Streets), Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and New York Avenue. Additional locations in the FY03 capital budget include Barracks Row/Main Street (8th Street SE), the Central Business District, Eastern Market Streetscape and P Street NW.
 5. 16th Street: This month DDOT is to start on the \$9.5 million improvement of 16th Street, NW, from Primrose Street to Eastern Avenue. The work, to be completed by late next year, includes the total reconstruction of the roadway from Alaska Avenue to Primrose Road, milling and resurfacing from Primrose to Eastern Avenue, construction of new storm water drainage from Alaska Avenue to Rock Creek and sidewalk, median island, street light, traffic signals

and landscaping improvements. Extensive consultation is proceeding with the community on traffic and other concerns.

6. Anacostia Freeway: Another major new DDOT project, this one on the east side of the Anacostia River in southwest, is the widening of the Anacostia Freeway from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to Chesapeake Street, SW. This \$26 million, two-year contract is to accommodate traffic from the new Bridge and includes widening, new retaining walls and grading and utility work.

However, the need remains great. I would like to take a moment to shed some light on the context within which this request is being presented. Over the last two years much effort has been exerted to bring the District's infrastructure and transportation service delivery to a reasonable level of quality. But there is still a backlog of trees that need to be trimmed and while much improvement in local road quality has been made, still 35% are rated fair or poor.

We have begun to develop acceptable standards and expectations - and, thanks in a large measure to the Committee - we have the resources to back those standards and expectations up.

Performance-Based Budgeting

As part of its effort to develop clear standards and measures for its operations, DDOT volunteered and was selected as one of the nine pilot agencies to implement Performance-Based Budgeting (PBB) in FY 2003. This method of budgeting provides a mechanism for more accurately

attributing dollar values to performance. This effort coincided with several initiatives in various administrations of DDOT to undertake business process reengineering (BPR), as well as activity-based costing (ABC). We believe that in combination, these efforts will allow for more efficient program execution and accurate analysis, as well as providing an objective method for presenting program benefits and implications.

DDOT staff contributed significant energy during the PBB process, in which we took an inventory of what services DDOT provides and then determined the most practical methods for evaluating performance. However, FY 2003 was the first step in the process. The process encouraged buy-in at all levels and we are looking forward to full implementation over the next two budget cycles.

In developing this budget, DDOT has categorized its functions into three program areas: Infrastructure Development and Maintenance, Transportation Operations, and Administration. These groupings best typify how DDOT invests its resources and serves as a good foundation to discuss the entire DDOT program.

Infrastructure Development

The Infrastructure Development program includes our project development teams, street and bridge maintenance, the urban forestry administration, elements of traffic services and the snow removal program.

Perhaps the most dramatic infrastructure renewal project that will be undertaken by this component of DDOT is the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI). DDOT will focus on one of five core strategies of the AWI: connecting the communities on each side of the river with each other and the river itself. DDOT has made real its commitment to building this project by announcing the addition of a new Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Implementation Coordinator. Over the next year, we will be able to begin putting meat to the bones of the AWI plan.

Using rights-of-way rental fees and the newly established Local Roads Trust Fund - established through the aggressive leadership of this Committee's Chair - our street maintenance program has begun to show significant results. We have reduced the average response time for pothole complaints from 9 days to 3.

Our next major step in this historically under-invested program is to use technology to take it to the next level. I recently spent some time with the staff of our street maintenance yard to look over the new Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) pilot program [please note the picture on the easel]. We plan to deploy this system to provide real-time location and activity information through sensors and computer equipment mounted in our trucks. This is how we are going to go the next step and get pothole response time down to three hours! But we are not simply going to make repairs faster; we are going to make them better. These funds are also being used to buy four integrated pothole repair vehicles like the one pictured here [see easel]. This machine will allow us to make high-quality, permanent repairs, while

enhancing worker productivity, but more importantly, safety. Our employees helped us pick these machines—we expect delivery of the first one by the fall.

DDOT's urban forestry program is poised to return Washington to the days when it was known as the “City of Trees”.

Using trust funds, DDOT will begin the process of eliminating dead and diseased tree and trimming backlogs, putting the District in a position to return to an industry-standard six-year trimming cycle. In FY 2003, trust funds will be used to plant 5,500 trees and continue, substantial, consistent trimming.

However, for the program to be successful in the long term, DDOT has to understand better its tree population and its needs. That is why DDOT is undertaking a complete inventory of our tree population. This will be done in cooperation with the Casey Tree Endowment and the U.S Forest Service, among others, using student volunteers and state-of-the-art technology, including handheld computers and geographic information systems (GIS).

We are also paying closer attention to our human residents as well! Safety for motorists and pedestrians is an important DDOT function. Perhaps the most visible action we've taken recently is the deployment of pedestrian safety pylons (direct the committee's attention to the example) —the yellow vertical structures that remind motorists to yield to pedestrians in the intersection have proved very popular. To date, 165 pylons have been deployed in areas of high pedestrian traffic and in areas where DDOT has

received complaints of vehicle encroachment in pedestrian rights of way. By the end of April 2002 185 more pylons will be in place.

DDOT is completing the upgrade of all signs at more than 300 schools in the District, including 7,120 parking signs, 1,861 school crossing signs, 3,320 speed limit signs, 142 arrow signs, 41 school crosswalks, and 31,000 feet of rumble strips around the schools. DDOT will resume the program this spring when weather conditions permit pavement marking. The program includes all institutions--public, charter and private. This again is one of the many important programs being funded out of the local roads trust fund.

Trust funds are also being used to better manage and calm traffic in District neighborhoods. New traffic signals are being installed at various points in the District - in past testimony I have highlighted a number of these locations, and would be happy to make a complete list available to the Committee. We are, perhaps, most proud of the trust-funded signal we are installing as we speak on Porter Street NW. This signal is among the very first speed-actuated signals in the country. Using radar, this signal will change the signal from green to red if a vehicle is exceeding the speed limit. The signal also includes a series of light-emitting diodes (LEDs) embedded in the pavement that will illuminate the crosswalk when pedestrians are crossing. With the \$6 million in trust funds available from FY 2003 through 2008, we hope to build similar calming devices in neighborhoods throughout the District.

LEDs are going to become familiar to District residents now that the Federal Highway Administration has approved DDOT's project to replace all of the traffic signal bulbs in the city with LEDs. LEDs last many times longer than regular incandescent bulbs and save energy.

Most importantly, these actions have had some measurable effect. There was a more than 30% reduction in pedestrian fatalities from 2000 to 2001.

Transportation Operations

The Transportation Operations function also has both current successes and exciting programs ahead in FY 2003. There have been several major innovations in the District's mass transit operations and relationship with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. This is particularly important for the District because we have 55% of WMATA's total weekday bus ridership and 41% of total weekday transit ridership in the region. And 3/5 of all DC residents who use transit, ride the bus. In DDOT's FY 2003 WMATA operating request, \$1 million is proposed for new and enhanced bus service.

For student passengers, DDOT introduced the new \$20 monthly student fare last year. With the SmartStudent Metrorail/Metrobus Transit Pass, a student has unlimited education-related travel on the bus or rail system. This not only reduces the cost of student travel, but also simplifies the distribution of passes by allowing sales at many middle, junior and senior high schools. The introduction of this pass has increased transit ridership without a significant increase in cost to the District. DDOT is requesting \$3.1 million for the School Transit Subsidy program in FY 2003, the same amount as the

approved budget for FY 2002.

Long-term expansion of the transit system will be necessary for the region if the projected regional growth is to be accommodated. DDOT and the Office of Planning have been engaged with WMATA in a DC Transit Development Study to examine the potential for new rail transit routes in the District over the next 25 years.

The recently released summary study, which received widespread favorable publicity, identifies nine corridors for possible transit expansion including bus, bus rapid transit, light rail and Metrorail. A public participation process is currently under way, including community meetings. This schedule will permit identification of one to four corridors for preliminary funding in the Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization. DDOT proposes to initiate a Major Investment Study/Alternatives Analysis of the preferred corridors with WMATA in FY 2003 as a prelude to Federal authorization for construction. Funds for this study are included in DDOT's FY03 WMATA capital funding request.

Under Transportation Operations is also the public space control function: permits and inspections. One of our continuing challenges is controlling access to our rights-of-way by utilities cutting our streets to upgrade current service, such as the traditional utilities, or to install new service, such as by the approximately 15 fiber-optic cable companies now operating in the District.

Significant improvements have been made in this area. With the approval of the City Council, we are collecting substantial rights-of-way rental fees. In FY 2003, we expect to collect more than \$36 million in these fees, all of which will be dedicated to the maintenance and repair of the local street system.

This year, we will deploy a full complement of our Neighborhood Infrastructure Maintenance Officers: NIMOs. NIMOs will be the District's front-line rights-of-way (ROW) protectors and problem-solvers working with other DC and Federal agencies, as well as private groups and individuals. NIMOs will protect the public safety and right-of-way through enforcing public space permit conditions, while monitoring infrastructure issues and problems before citizens have to request service. It will also be their duty to enforce our regulations and minimize utility street disruptions. Today, we have hired all 30 NIMOs. They will complete an intensive training program to develop an awareness and knowledge base of all transportation elements within the rights-of-way - including a course in forestry.

Administration

DDOT's administrative and planning function has focused much of its efforts in FY 2002 on emergency preparedness and planning. Given the continued heightened state of readiness, we see no reason why these efforts will abate in the coming fiscal year. DDOT has already made great strides in - with the assistance and cooperation with the Council of Governments -

bringing together the various regional transportation agencies, jurisdictions, operating entities and stakeholders.

The results have been an impressive set of plans and specific programs - immediate and longer term. Backed-up by our \$21.6 million in Homeland Defense appropriations, DDOT is leading a regional effort to install Evacuation/Event Route (E-Route) signage throughout the District and the region. These signs will delineate the 14 primary routes of ingress and egress to and from the District and the Beltway.

Undergirding the E-Routes is a series of specific plans and actions, including police controlled intersections in the District and surrounding jurisdictions and signal timing enhancements and coordination. A regional GIS database of important corridors, staging areas, access-points, emergency mobility routes, helicopter landing zones, and the like has also been developed and shared with our regional and federal partners. And efforts are underway to tie together DDOT's nascent infrastructure status monitoring system with those of MDOT, VDOT, METRO and MPD. DDOT is taking this charge very seriously in part because we believe that the best offense is a good defense.

Conclusion

Over the last few years, DDOT has been working aggressively to improve service delivery to the citizens of the District of Columbia and show enhanced performance outcomes. Our challenge continues to be the identification and deployment of resources to operate both the neighborhood

and state transportation mandates of the DDOT at exemplary standards. It is our view that the resources set-aside for DDOT in FY 2003 - its first full year as a stand-alone agency - will allow us to continue to make substantial improvement in this regard.

This completes my presentation and the highlights of our budget request. I would be happy to join my colleagues in responding to the Councilmembers' questions.